1. **In the space below, describe the stasis at the beginning of Trifles. In other words, “Where are we?” “When is it (time, day, and year)?” “Who are the people involved?” “What is the dramatic situation in which the characters find themselves as the play unfolds?”**

We enter into the abandoned kitchen of John Wright, the year is 1916. The kitchen is left in obvious disarray with several unfinished tasks evident, “a gloomy kitchen, without having been put in order.” In the kitchen we have three men and two women, the county attorney, the sheriff, Mr. Hale, Mrs. Hale, and Mrs. Peters.

1. **What is the intrusion that causes the stasis to be broken and the dramatic action to develop, often at an increasingly rapid pace, to the end of the play?**

The intrusion in this play is the moment when Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters find the dead Canary.

**3. Why do the events of the play take place at this particular time and place? In other words, what is the unique factor which is out of the ordinary that causes a turn of events to take place?**

The play takes place in an empty house a day after a murder took place. It is interesting that this is the first time the attorney and sheriff are seeing the crime scene with this group of people. The wives, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, are just conversating in the living room of the crime scene.

**4. State the dramatic question or questions that must be answered by the end of the play? (Ordinarily, the dramatic question shares a close connection with the intrusion.)**

1. Did Mrs.Wright kill her husband?
2. Why did she do it?
3. Will the women try to save Mrs.Wright from prosecution?

**5. Use Ms. Hale to answer the questions concerning character. Ball says, a character is revealed by what he/she does, that is the dramatic actions that are taken. Examine what the character wants (NOTE: In Trifles the wants of Ms. Hale change as the play progresses). The wants of a character often encounter obstacles that get in the way of achieving those wants. Ball says there are 4 kinds of obstacles that frustrate the wants of a character. They are: a. Me against myself, b. Me against another individual, c. Me against society (that is law, social norms, etc.) and, d. Me against fate, the universe, natural forces, God or the gods. In answering these questions be sure to point to the particular obstacles that demonstrate these obstacles for Ms. Hale.**

In the beginning of the play, Ms. Hale wants to figure out of Mrs. Wright killed her husband. As the play goes on, she wants to save Mrs.Wright from getting caught.

1. Me against myself: Ms. Hale feels bad that she did not come visit Mrs. Wright sooner.
2. Me against another individual: Ms. Hale against Mr. Wright because she assumes that he abused his wife. So, she has anger towards him.
3. Me against society: When Ms.Hale hides the dead bird, she is going againist the law and hiding evidence. This could have been crucial to proving that Mrs.Wright did kill her husband.
4. Me against fate: Wether or not the attorney or sheriff found any other evidence, it may not matter if she hid the dead bird. If it was fate that Mrs. Wright goes to jail, then the hidden evidence would mean nothing.

**6. The most important information in most plays takes place during theatrical moments. Identify the most theatrical moments in Trifles.**

The most theatrical moment is when Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale hide the canary bird, without speaking. Thus they show themselves as concerned about more than just daily “trifles,” creating a character type, and preventing the men from attaining there evidence of motive.

**7. Provide at least three examples of images in Trifles. How does the title of the play help us understand the images in the play? (Remember Ball says that, “An image is the use of something we know that tells us something we don’t know.” He goes on to say that images invoke and expand, rather than define and limit.”)**

1. The opening scene, where the kitchen is described in disarray
2. The scene where they find the canary
3. The scene where Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters hide evidence without speaking

**8. Ordinarily, there are many themes in most plays. List the themes in Trifles.**

The themes in this play are character types, specifically men and women. Additionally, Trifles focuses on justice- how it is perceived, executed, and served.

**9. Most American plays have something to do with family and/or family relationships. What does family have to do with Trifles? Is family redefined in Trifles?**

Trifles focuses on gender role and family, specifically on how the male affects the female. The play represents a certain kind of bond that can be found amongst minority groups. The women in the story, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, seem to have a protective sort of feeling towards Mrs. Wright in the situation. There’s a sense of guilt, especially on the part of Mrs. Peters, for letting things get out of hand. They make insinuations several times about Mr. Wright possibly beating Mrs. Wright. It is this sense of comradery and responsibility that defines family in this play- Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters protect Mrs. Wright under the belief that they could have prevented the final outcome and furthermore, it could have happened to them. As women they have an innate understanding of each other’s experiences.